

COME!!!! Come.....Come???

One of the most important things we can teach our dogs is come with called. Which in the training world we call a recall.

It could save our dogs life and a reliable recall is a basic part of training.

There are many ways to teach a dog to recall, but I find that with the Stabyhoun we must first and foremost make it one of the most fun things in the whole wide world! We have to make it one of the most rewarding things to do and of course keep their interest.

So here are some ways to start getting it right:

Get the right reward

Come when called must be rewarding, and a mistake that is commonly made is that people use a reward they think the dog should have rather than using a reward the dog would want to have. Find out what your dog will work for, what your dog finds most rewarding, and remember that they only get it when they come when called. Do not use everyday things like dry kibble; they get that every single day, so why would your Stabyhoun stop smelling the bunny trail and come for that?

Start training from day one

You should start to train your dog to recall using its name from day one. Recalls must always be a reward based exercise

Do restrained recalls

Restrained recalls help get the dog enthusiastic about coming.

A Helper holds the (flat collar) while the owner walks (runs) away, sometimes it helps when the owner shows the dog its reward and runs away, then turns around and calls out the dog's name and "come!" When the owner's calls the dog's name, the helper lets go of the dog and the owner rewards the dog when the dog comes to him.



When this goes well the owner now calls the dog to come and puts his hands on the collar and then rewards.

Tip: Some dogs are very smart and owners almost only put their hands on the collar when they are going to put the leash back on... dogs quickly learn this and when you go to grab the collar the dog runs away. This habit can be prevented by doing a number of recalls and grabbing the collar, rewarding the dog and then letting go, so the dog never knows when the leash will be put back on, and come is very rewarding indeed.

The dog might be very excited to get to its owner when he walks away; it is important that the helper not give the dog any commands and remain silent and passive. Remember this is all about the dog wanting to go to its owner.

Tip: If the dog jumps up allot the Helper can place a hand place a flat hand on the dogs back by his hind legs.

Proceed with this training until the dog is recalling at speed over distances of 30-40 yards.

When this is going well, take the next step to add even more speed to your dog. Have the helper hold the dog, the owner is 40 yards away, calls the dog and when the dog is about 15 yards from the owner , the owner turns and runs away from the dog, this starts a game of chase and will speed up the dog considerably, when the dog reaches the owner; reward.



This method makes come very exciting, by running away you kick up the natural prey drive in your dog, (hey I can chase my owner instead of a squirrel) this makes you more fun and there is a reward at the end. You might want to throw a ball or play a game of tug as a reward.

TIP: attach a squeaky toy to the end of a leash and clutch it to your chest while running when the dog reaches you throw out the toy, since you are holding onto the other end of the leash the dog can't take the toy and dash away, you are connected.

Set your dog up to succeed.

Remember dogs do not generalize well, so start training come in a low distraction area and work your way up to higher distractions For example start in your own back yard not in the leash free park full of birds and rabbits.

If you do not trust your dog to come, buy a flat 30 foot lead (not an extended lead) that way you can grab the lead and guide your dog to you.

Make yourself the most rewarding thing out there.

Let's face it the Stabyhoun is a beautiful dog but one with a high prey drive and a stubborn streak.

You want to make yourself the most interesting and rewarding thing in your dog's life. Start by acknowledging your dog on walks whenever it is on a leash and it looks at you or gives you its full attention, reward that behaviour, if

your dog is off leash and comes to you when you didn't call him, reward that. Remember there are plenty of birds and other animals out there but he choose to come to you.

Play games on your walk, if you have the toy on a leash let it run through the grass, swirl it around get excited for the game.

Teach your dog that attention on you and coming to you is the greatest and most reward able thing in life to do.

Common Mistakes

There are some things people do that actually ruin "come" and most people are not aware that they are doing it.

Mistake number one;

Repeating ourselves over and over... you create what we call the "delayed reaction dog" if you get into the habit of calling "come!" 30 times in a row your dog will learn that he-she does not have to react right away, your dog will tune you out "there they go again with the come thing...got at least 20 more of those to go before I have to think about reacting"

Mistake number two;

Linking the word come to everything, example "come in your crate, come inside! Come outside! Come in the car, come this, come that, and my all time favourite: telling a dog to "come "when he is right there on a leash sitting by your side. He is already there; there is no need to come...

If your dog is on a leash and you want to start your walk say "let's go" if he needs to come inside just say: "inside" if the dog needs to go in the crate just say "crate" this stops you from making come a negative as well because let's face it a dog having a ball outside does not want to come inside... and remember "come" must be fun

Mistake number 3

The dog does not come and is running around having fun with friends etc, we get frustrated and when the dog does come you act displeased or worse punish the dog.

Now this may be hard to do but never make your dog regret coming to you.

And if it took your dog 10 min to come, do not punish him when he finally does, remember dogs live in the moment, and will not realize you are upset because he didn't come right away but will rather think you are upset because he finally did come! So why bother coming faster next time?

Practice:

With patience and practice ...lots of practice you can teach your dog to come.

Good luck to all you Stabyhoun owners!